



## ***PRESS RELEASE***

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California Postsecondary Education Commission  
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### **Higher Education Agency Tackles Accountability**

*August 30, 2005* — Sacramento — The California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) today announced that it has taken the first steps in developing an accountability system for California higher education. The Commission will discuss the accountability system at its meeting on September 6-7, 2005, in Sacramento, California.

The purpose of accountability in higher education is to understand how effective and efficient California's system of postsecondary education is in meeting the state's workforce development needs while ensuring access to a quality, affordable higher education.

By collecting key indicators of performance in California's colleges and universities and making them available to policy makers and the public, the Commission seeks to provide a baseline for assessing whether, and how well, the goals of the State's Master Plan for Higher Education are being met.

"The state spends more than \$12 billion every year on higher education," stated CPEC Executive Director Murray Haberman. "The legislature, the Governor and the consumers of higher education — students, their families, and employers -- should be able to access critical information in such areas as transfer, time to degree, degree production, enrollments, and eligibility."

CPEC Chair Howard Welinsky noted that, "No one would argue that the only purpose of higher education is to prepare Californians for specific jobs. But the fact remains that in today's knowledge-based "Flat World" economy, California's higher education graduates will compete with graduates from throughout the world. A well developed accountability system will help to ensure that our graduates are prepared to meet this challenge."

Based on an exhaustive review of accountability systems nationwide, the CPEC accountability system addresses five broad categories of performance:

- **Student Success and Efficiency in Student Progress** — This goal recognizes the importance of a timely and efficient progression of students toward achieving the goal of graduation.
- **Diversity and Access** - This goal covers a wide range of access issues, from outreach and preparation, to affordability, to striving to achieve racial and socioeconomic

representation on college campuses that reflects the racial and socioeconomic distribution of the state's population.

- **Educational Quality** – This goal recognizes the state’s dedication to providing students with a first-rate educational experience by examining the quality of instruction, student access to faculty and advisors, and overall student satisfaction with the value of their education.
- **Public Benefit** -- This goal acknowledges the contributions that a university campus makes to the community in which it is located and postsecondary education’s overall role in maintaining a healthy state economy and commitment to the state’s diverse cultures.
- **Efficiency in Administration** – This goal promotes achieving the most effective allocation of state resources within college and university systems to ensure that taxpayer dollars are best spent for the administration of public higher education.

Accountability has become a major focus of higher education not only in California, but also nationally. During the last two legislative sessions, several initiatives have been introduced, yet none have become law.

The development of an effective accountability system is the first priority of CPEC and, while the Commission supports all legislative initiatives, it believes that implementing an accountability structure should not be subject to further delay.

“Our initiative is not the last word on higher education accountability in California -- far from it,” stated Haberman. “We hope to provide a platform that can be modified and changed as needed by the higher education community, policy makers, and the public.”

**The Commission’s accountability web page can be found at:**

**<http://www.cpec.ca.gov/Accountability/AccountabilitySystem.asp>**

*The California Postsecondary Education Commission advises the Governor and Legislature on higher education policy and fiscal issues. Its primary focus is to ensure that the state’s educational resources are used effectively to provide Californians with postsecondary education opportunities. More information about the Commission and its work can be found at its website at [www.cpec.ca.gov](http://www.cpec.ca.gov).*